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## Vernacular Names of Birds.

EDITORS OF 'THE AUK':—

*Dear Sirs:*—The subject of vernacular names of birds is not of supreme importance in ornithology, but, since it has been opened, I hope I may be allowed to make a little suggestion. First let me say, though I am well aware that Dr. Allen's views need no endorsement from me, that I am in entire accord with them in the matter of hyphenating, and this in spite of a tendency toward purism which should perhaps lead me to stand by the dictionaries and Dr. Doran. It has always seemed to me that the words 'song,' 'tree,' 'swamp,' etc., as used in connection with the names of sparrows are as truly adjectival in sense as if they were actual adjectives instead of nouns, and I can see no good reason why the combinations should be differentiated in form from such names as 'chipping sparrow' and 'white-throated sparrow.' The case of 'quail-dove' is different, of course, as are those of 'water-thrush' and 'meadow-lark.' Personally I should have preferred 'meadow-lark,' 'night-hawk,' etc., reserving the single-word form for the more familiar compounds of the word 'bird,' but I cheerfully follow the A. O. U. in vernacular as well as in the scientific names. (There is just one bit of sentimentalism in the list, which I cannot countenance: I refuse to call a snow bunting a 'snowflake.' I also prefer, in conversation, to speak of white-bellied instead 'white-breasted' nuthatches.)

But, to come to the point of this communication, it seems to me that a much more serious difficulty than that of the hyphens is the lack of qualifying or what I may call 'specific' and 'subspecific' adjectives for the names of certain birds like the chickadee, the horned lark, the redpoll, and the towhee. Why should we not have full vernacular names for *Parus atricapillus*, *Otocoris alpestris*, *Acanthis linaria*, *Pipilo erythrophthalmus*, etc., which will tell exactly what species and subspecies is referred to in any given case without the help of the scientific name? We should not always have to use the complete name, of course, but it would be convenient to have one to use when needed and one that is sanctioned by the Union. I hope that this matter may be considered by the Committee on Nomenclature when the next edition of the Check-List is prepared.

FRANCIS H. ALLEN.

Boston, Mass.

## A Rare Work on American Ornithology.

EDITORS OF 'THE AUK':—

*Dear Sirs:*—Captain Thomas Brown's folio 'Illustrations of the American Ornithology of Wilson and Bonaparte' is such a scarce book that you may deem it worthy of a notice in your pages. By a careful